

# Reimagining in Order to Reimage God: A Depth Psychological Look at the Book of Job in Relation to the Deuteronomistic History and Its Application for Today

TIFFANY HOUCK-LOOMIS

“We need stories in order to live.”

–Joan Didion

Meeting Ann Ulanov in 2009 forever changed the course of my path. Though, another way of seeing it might be that my path was headed toward this particular course and toward meeting Dr. Ulanov as a mentor and guide who would help me discern that which was already discerning itself within. This is the mystery to which I have learned to respond and be curious about from the years of working with and learning from Dr. Ulanov. In particular she has helped me discern the mercurial path toward holding the tension between the two disparate and diverse fields of Hebrew Bible and Depth Psychology. She continually encourages not to dismiss one or the other, a temptation given the demands of each field and the very different aspects of the Self each field calls upon to wrestle with, engage, and work through. What follows is an example of the kind of work her mentorship has inspired over the years. Using the rich imagery of food Ulanov always encourages to seek out the intellectual protein for good nutrition and she herself delights in eating a rainbow of color for dinner. In light of her mentorship I have sought to engage that which is both personally sustaining and nutritious through its protein and vibrant colors and trust that, in turn, it has meaning for others along the journey.

Anyone who has had a family member or friend die at a young age from cancer or a tragic accident, lost a baby before she was born or at birth, lived in a war torn ghetto or in the country responsible for unnecessary bombings, or worked as a Chaplain in a hospital and seen the complete randomness of death, loss, and tragedy that befalls those that work hard to live perfectly healthy and safe and are devout religious practitioners does not question how a story like Job, in the Hebrew Bible, gets constructed and canonized as sacred text. The randomness of tragedy is not a modern epidemic and the quandary of the order of the universe, the nature of suffering, the questions of whether or not there is a God attentive and attuned to such tragedies, or perhaps the very cause, are not new. As we can read, from early Jewish and Christian writers to those of the critical era today,

these questions continue to surface when one picks up the book of Job.<sup>1</sup> There are as many answers to these questions as there are people who ask them. In reading Carl G. Jung, Donald Winnicott, and Ann Ulanov side by side with the book of Job in relation to the dominant Deuteronomistic History<sup>2</sup> in the Hebrew Bible I will add yet another perspective. My perspective is specifically related to the life of ancient Israel and the concept of history making and history telling within the Hebrew canon. I propose that the book of Job can be read as a symbolic history that juxtaposes the dominant history referred to henceforth as the Deuteronomistic History or Covenant Religion. I look at how, from the psychoanalytic perspectives of Jung, Winnicott, and Ulanov, we can understand the role of history making and telling for today in light of personal and collective traumatic life experiences. It is my hope that through a depth psychological read of these two “historical” narratives, that of the Deuteronomistic History and the symbolic history of Job, one might find his or her own personal way into questions about the presence and nature of evil that continue to affect all of humanity.

### MINDING THE GAP: ITS VALUE AND ITS PITFALL

When one begins to confront that which has been cut off from consciousness, yet before integration is possible and the way forward is clear, a gap is created. The gap is experienced between what is known, what has previously governed one’s life, and what is unknown, what has been left in the shadows, repressed or

---

1 *Voice From The Whirlwind* ed. Leo G. Perdue and W. Clark Gilpin (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), provides a good general overview and summary of arguments from ancient to modern day critical scholarship on the book of Job. Also see David Clines, Job 1–20 in *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 17, (Dallas, Texas: Word books, 1989), Alan Cooper, “Narrative Theory and the Book of Job,” in *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses*, 11:35 (1982), and “Reading and Misreading the Prologue to Job,” in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 46 (1990), 67–79; David Wolfers, *Deep Things Out of Darkness* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1995); Bruce Zuckerman, *Job The Silent: A Study in Historical Counterpoint* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), and C. L. Seow, *Job 1-21: Interpretation and Commentary*. Michigan & Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013.

2 The formal study of the Deuteronomistic History hypothesis, though it originally built upon the scholarship of W. M. de Wette (1780-1849), H. Ewald (1803-1857), Wellhausen (1844–1918) and others, was first formally elaborated and set forth by Martin Noth (1943) who defined the ‘Deuteronomistic style’ as a style literarily in line with the language and themes in Deuteronomy, and advocated for the evidence of Deuteronomistic redactions or later textual additions added to a former corpus of work inside the historical books and the prophets, Martin Noth in *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1943). Since Noth first proposed his theory, the Deuteronomistic History hypothesis has itself almost reached canonical status according to McKenzie (ABD, 1992), Y. Kaufmann (1960), and I. Engnell (1969). Though the concept is widely accepted and almost taken for granted within the guild of biblical studies, the diversely varying ways different scholars reconstruct this proposed history are phenomenally disparate.

projected upon others. This gap is simultaneously life threatening and life giving. To choose to live in it, consciously, even if only momentarily, one creates space between one's self and another, actual external others separate from one's own projections upon those others. This space created allows for others to be able to be experienced as others in their own right, independent of the perceiver's internal reality. The gap created here is between what one has always known and a glimpse that such knowledge has been subjectively informed, perhaps created by the subject as a means for survival but not based on the reality of the object perceived. Before the gap, one's particular rules were failsafe, allowing one's ruling principle or ego perspective;<sup>3</sup> one's consciously identified self or way of living, to dominate. The gap opens up at the very point when this principle or perspective falters.

The reasons for this falter are abundant and varied. Growth, death, life-transitions, or trauma—personal or collective—are just a few events that could initiate such an opening. Anything that challenges one's previous *Weltanschauung*, or worldview, creates enough dissonance wherein one is thrust into the abyss, and one's previous roadmap is no longer applicable. This gap, though opened up, may either be traversed or ignored. Denying the gap does not make the reality of what it opens up disappear, but rather, it may continue to press this reality further into the shadows where it is not nurtured, tended to, or brought into the light. Stepping into the gap (rather than being dragged into it), while it can feel life threatening, alarming, or terrifyingly empty, if tolerated and maintained, can also bring with it a kind of depth wherein previously disallowed substantive material can provide a new way of living that enables one to find truth in the midst of life's horrors.

Ann and Barry Ulanov describe this gap as the space “between what we want and what we get, between what we ambition and what we realize, between where we should be and where we are, between the ideal and the reality” and in this space, “we see the positive and negative collide” and we “recognize they live next to each other.”<sup>4</sup> Ulanov contends that the gap opens up the path toward symbolic death,<sup>5</sup> “the space of darkness in time, the time of searing light in space, the gateway to what our symbols symbolize.”<sup>6</sup> The gap does not offer easy solutions nor does it offer neat and tidy ethical, moral, or theological positions. That was the previous *modus operandi* in one's ruling principle, one's ego consciousness. Rather, the gap may serve as a womb, nurturing the previously cut-out aspects of the Self. The gap opens into this womb, which more often negatively feels like a chasm or abyss, where there is nothing to be done or known.

---

3 This is Jung's term in *The Red Book* (2009) for what generally dominates a person's ego-consciousness, what is “right” according to the subject's personal and societal standards.

4 Ulanov and Ulanov, *Healing Imagination* (Canada: Daimon Verlag, 1991/99/2008), 27.

5 Ulanov quotes Jung who says regarding the positive and necessary function of symbolic death, “We are threatened with universal genocide if we cannot work out the way of salvation by a symbolic death.” Jung, Vol. 18 of *CW*, par. 1661.

6 Ulanov, *The Unshuttered Heart: Opening Aliveness/Deadness in the Self* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 218.

In this space one can simply be and observe. The Ulanovs remind us that the only thing to do in the gap is to let it happen, see what happens and reflect upon what happens.<sup>7</sup> In the No-thing space<sup>8</sup> one cannot do anything, cannot pull herself up or continue in the same way as before, for the previous way has ceased working. These unconscious aspects of one's personality, which lurk in the shadows and are awaiting in the abyss into which the gap thrusts, include affect, particularly what is felt as negative affect; aggression, depression, desire, passion, and rage, previously not linked up with external reality. In resting in the gap, and observing what happens there, these unconscious aspects are slowly *remembered*. They are brought into consciousness and can become members once again with the body, individual and collective. But first, there is living in the gap.

Winnicott describes the gap as space, space between subject and object wherein one transitions from relating to external others as subjective objects, created out of projections of the subject's self and perceptions, to objective objects, others as subjects in their own right with their own experiences. It is within this space that one can use objects that are subjectively imbued and objectively affirmed by others' recognition of them, allowing the subject to create space between herself and her internalized objects, first her care-givers and her first symbols or transitional objects such as her bear or blanket, later her cultural objects such as myths, traditions, and art. In maintaining their symbolic value these subjective objects accompany the individual in this gap-living space and enable the individual to create meaning that allows for difference and individuality. Eventually these objects are experienced objectively, meaning outside of the subject's projective relation to them. Once objects are objectively perceived they can be consciously used within the gap to help individuals establish a sense of external reality in which to live, and live related with others different from one's own person.

However, trauma can threaten this space and short-cut its tenure causing these objective objects to lose their symbolic value. Instead, such objects maintain their subjective quality without enabling the individual to transition and live in the shared world of external reality. I contend that this was the fate of the Deuteronomistic Covenant as it was adapted and adopted amongst a subsection of the Israelite elites responsible for constructing what is now referred to as the Deuteronomistic History, the constructed dominant history of Israel now read in the books of Joshua to Kings, who themselves lived through the atrocity of the exile and its aftermath (597 BCE–520 BCE).

## TRAUMA AND SYMBOL IN THE GAP

It is my view that the book of Job traverses the gap as articulated above. The cumulative events of exile and the final atrocious events of the Babylonian Exile (597–586 BCE) left Israel bereft of former symbols, symbols such as the

7 Ulanov and Ulanov, *Healing Imagination*, 20.

8 This is Ann Ulanov's term for the space opened up by the gap. *Unshuttered Heart*, 218.

Covenant. The Covenant, as one of the symbols created out of years of living under Assyrian oppression, was maintained during exile. However, the way in which it was maintained disallowed the affective experience of rage at the injustice of the Babylonian trauma as it imbibed the belief that Israel was to blame due to its own wickedness. The national historical narrative, influenced by the symbol of the Covenant, inscribed this belief. However, there was another narrative that arose in the rubble. I argue the book of Job arose as a new symbol, a symbol of Israel and Israel's relationship to the Divine, precisely because of the narrator's willingness to place Job's story in the chasm opened up by the gap between what Israel thought would happen, salvation or restoration upon its land, and what, in actuality, did happen, exile and utter decimation of their temple and their city, Jerusalem.

The prosaic *inclusio* of the Book of Job (1–2 and 42: 7–17) frames the gap into which the book's poetic core (3–42:6) plunges. This prosaic *inclusio*, with its choice descriptions of the protagonist as blameless and pure (*tam*), elicits an image of Israel that *remembers* the eradicated experience of the Exile, and through the poetic core the narrator's (or narrators')<sup>9</sup> imagination, articulated in the dialogue between Job and the diverse characters within the book, provides a bridge upon which Israel, and readers today, may be able to traverse the gap opened up by trauma.

The book of Job opens the gap into what Ulanov calls the “No-thing space”—the abyss, the space where Israel is forced to wrestle with the death of the previously conceived notion of the Covenant, that which stated Israel would be rewarded land and progeny for their obedience and conversely promised destruction for their disobedience. And yet, the book of Job simultaneously imaginatively provides a bridge, through its poetry that allows Israel and readers of the Bible today to imagine new ways into relationship with one's abolished experiences and thus, into relationship with one's whole personality (all the dissociated parts now included), community, and God, reestablishing Covenantal life through different means. In the words of Alice Miller, the character of Job in the book of Job main-

---

9 As is the case in biblical scholarship there are as many arguments for the side of one author as there are for the side of multiple authors, for a synchronic and a diachronic reading, for reading the prose and poetry sections as separate and distinct or reading them as a unified whole. Though there is no real consensus among Joban scholars regarding the historical-critical questions I agree with a number of scholars who articulate the following reconstruction. The poetry and prose of Job originate from different points of contact. Whether these points are historically different times, or different communities of authorship within the same time period remains unknown and is relatively tertiary to do hermeneutical and exegetical justice to the book. The two distinct sections include the prose narrative or folktale read in Chapters 1-2 and 42:7-17 and the poetic core in Chapters 3 – 42:1-6. The folktale presents a Job from a far away place in a far away time. It is a story without a timestamp or particular historical location mirroring the kind of narrative set-up given in the ancestral narratives. This particular setting is not actual but rather used as a narratological device.

tains “the courage to see,” which “may be nothing else than the courage to feel the plight of (his) own history.” After that, “everything else is easier to bear.”<sup>10</sup>

Read in this new light, the character of Job serves as the new symbol of Israel, Israel post exile, post destruction of the temple and loss of land. The character of Job, as the symbol of Israel, is thrust into the gap after the atrocities befell him and remains in the gap for the majority of the book (Job 3–42:6). Through the poetic core Job’s affect enables him to voice the pain of such devastating loss, reject responsibility for such circumstances, and ultimately to confront Adonai for the wrath Job has incurred which his friends contend is a result of his disobedience. Yet, it is Job’s ability to integrate such affect, voice it and give it space that allows him to experience Reality beyond the symbol of the Covenant. At the end of the poetic core Adonai shows up and speaks to Job, in the same poetic way in which the narrator chose to voice Job. God’s speech conjures images of creation that remind the listener and the reader today of that which is beyond the symbols we construct as a means of survival, growth, and identification. Rather than interpreting God’s appearance, and his speeches, as a further shaming of Job, wherein one conjectures the meaning was to silence Job, I speculate God’s words assure Israel that Adonai can and does survive the deconstruction of the Covenant and sees Israel in the midst of the devastating experience of exile and the arduous process of reconstruction.

This very process of deconstruction, which calls for a re-imagining of Israel, Adonai, and history as it is constructed in the national narrative formulated in the biblical books of Joshua through Kings, rather than rendering the covenant inadequate,<sup>11</sup> presented Israel with another way to engage with the Reality beyond the Covenant. This other way that freed the Covenant from its dogmatic renderings, recognized God’s actions *hinnām*, without cause, and allowed Israel to grapple with a reality beyond the Covenant, a reality where God acts and creates in the world, without cause, meaning, not in response to obedience or disobedience of the Covenant. This new image of God, though admittedly sounding somewhat grim, allows Israel, and those who are in relationship with these sacred texts today, to recognize the Divine, and the symbol of the Covenant, as objective others, not as subjective objects that one creates and are thus bound to the subject by way of his actions and experiences.

The book of Job emerges in the space between Israel and the experience of exile, between Israel and Israel’s Covenantal image of God, as an object that allows Israel to destroy the codified beliefs of retribution inscribed within the Covenant,

---

10 Alice Miller was a practicing psychoanalyst in Zürich between 1960–1980 at which point she left her practice and eventually, after years of her own research and writing on parental child abuse and trauma she eventually denied the efficacy of psychoanalysis and took up painting. She is perhaps most noted for her book *The Drama of the Gifted Child* (New York: Basic Books, 1981). This quote was taken from personal correspondence with Donald Capps, August 9, 2005. Quoted in Robert C. Dykstra’s article, “Unrepressing the Kingdom: Pastoral Theology as Aesthetic Imagination” in *Pastoral Psychology* 61 (2012), 407.

11 As David Wolfers’ contends in *Deep Things Out of Darkness*. Michigan: Eerdmans, 1995.

now read in the book of Deuteronomy, and thus the covenantal history articulated in the books of Joshua through Kings. Winnicott describes the work of destruction within the intermediate space between subject and object, early on the space between baby and mothering-one, as the transformative process that establishes external reality for the subject.<sup>12</sup> In this sense, the book of Job functions to enable Israel to loosen the Covenant from its subjective tangle and places it in the world of external reality. What this does for the Hebrew canon as a whole is it places God outside of Israel's obedience or disobedience and thus frees Israel from the grips of an oppressive and shaming God-image.

This move is vitally relevant and important for those who seek meaning within the sacred texts of the canon regardless of one's religion or belief system. For, the work of the book of Job is found in how the book dismantles our quest for explanations for evil or for suffering, or our desire to find these answers and explanations within ourselves, others, or even God. Functioning as symbol, the narrated character of Job does this work for Israel by confronting God regarding the injustice of his experience (symbolically speaking about the devastating experience of Exile), and is met by God in a face-to-face encounter through the whirlwind (Job 38). The encounter does not answer Job's interrogation directly and thus it leaves scholars and readers of the text today in a quandary for how to interpret its message.

I suggest this ambiguous move, the narrator's unwillingness to give a specific or direct answer, allows for a new god-image. This new God being imaged is not partial to right action or obedience, is not moved by sacrifice or perfection as in the image proffered in the Covenant, but rather, is a God that sees and holds all beings, all processes, all experiences in view and acts on account of all of creation rather than in relation to one aspect of creation alone. This God is not concerned with rigid obedience nor is this God swayed by perfection. The view remains somewhat inconclusive in that there is no person, system, or place wherein one can put that which is felt to be bad. This means that one cannot blame herself, or her neighbor, her children, her partner, her nation, other nations, or her God for the evil experienced. The evil in the book of Job simply is. The prologue imagines the evil coming from *hassatan* at the approval of Adonai. However, Adonai of the poetry does not mention *hassatan* and changes the focus entirely. In Adonai's non-answer to the "problem of evil" in the world one is left in the tension of knowing evil exists and yet also knowing the world is much bigger than one's personal picture of it. This view actually changes one's understanding of and relationship

---

12 As Winnicott says, the transition from object-relating to object-usage is the ability for the subject to say, in a sense, "I destroyed you... and the object is there to receive the communication. From now on the subject says to the object: 'I destroyed you. I love you.' 'You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you.' 'While I am loving you I am all the time destroying you in (unconscious) fantasy. Here fantasy begins for the individual. The subject can now use the object that has survived... and is now placed outside of the area of omnipotent control.'" Donald Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, (London & New York: Routledge Classics, 1991, originally published by Tavistock Publications Ltd, 1971), 121.

to evil while simultaneously changing one's understanding of God. The book of Job, read symbolically, allows readers today a way to wrestle with the impossibility of evil, internal and external, knowing God also sees it and knows it and has not caused it to happen as a result of any action but also does not necessarily provide a way to escape it or rectify it in our present situation.<sup>13</sup>

Job's relation to postexilic Israel and the story's presence and relation within the Hebrew canon are not the only ideological relationships altered. Just as scholars of the book of Job have inevitably, whether intentionally or not, used Job as a way to argue for or against the goodness of God or the presence of suffering and evil in our world in light of God's goodness and what the faithful person's response ought to be, I also venture to make a statement about the role of Job for faith communities today as I argue the new image being proffered asks for its readers to grapple with God's *hinnām* and thus reckon with the reality of evil within and without. For just as the narrated character of Job personified a communal struggle and thus provided an image for community renewal, so too, any individual today who situates herself in the gap opened up through the book of Job and in her personal experiences, wrestles with the deconstruction of the symbols, personal and collective, she contributes to society.<sup>14</sup> As Ulanov says, "By restoring our personal life in that space, space is made in the culture itself for self and symbol to be refound or found for the first time."<sup>15</sup>

### JOB AS A SYMBOLIC HISTORY: IMPLICATIONS FOR PASTORAL THEOLOGY

What I have argued here is an alternative interpretation of the book of Job serving as a symbolic history within the Hebrew canon and its importance for an understanding of the symbol of the Covenant as it is constructed throughout the Deuteronomistic History. However, this is only one possible interpretation. I do not argue that there is only one way to interpret the book of Job, nor is there one meaning. I believe choosing to read the book of Job as a symbolic history of Israel has, at least, two functions. First, it opens up the foreclosed parts of Israel's history, allowing readers of the Hebrew Bible another picture of Israel's history of exile, culminating in the Babylonian Exile of the sixth century B.C.E. Read as a symbolic history the book of Job does not offer chronological details or any "authorized" version of Israel's history of monarchy, division, economic position in the ancient Near East, or national collapse, but rather, it stands as an archive of

13 Here, I am suggesting something different than Jung who places the evil within God, as an amoral unconscious content who is spurred on by Job to become conscious through the incarnation of Christ. See C. G. Jung *C.W.* Vol. 11, "Answer to Job," (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

14 Jung's idea of individuation is precisely this—our personal work toward wholeness contributes to society, it is not merely individualistic or a move toward individualism but rather a move into greater connectedness and community through differentiation and through our personal processes.

15 Ulanov, *Madness and Creativity* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2013), 24.



the trauma of the Babylonian Exile.<sup>16</sup> As an archive, it stands, peripherally, but nonetheless beside, the national narrative wherein the symbol of the Covenant collapses into concretized notions of obedience and perfection due to unrecognized and immaterialized affect. By standing beside the national narrative portrayed through the books of Deuteronomy—Kings, Job stands as the inferior function to the Covenant's ruling principle ultimately serving the Covenant by dismantling its concretized notion of the good. Understood in this way, Job remains in the canon, not as part of the Torah or the history but rather, in the writings, most dominantly understood as wisdom literature. This grants Job, in a sense, a prophetic quality within the Hebrew canon as it contains that which the Covenant left out.<sup>17</sup>

However, this is not the only function of reading Job as a symbolic history. The second function is for reading communities today, which has implications for pastoral theology. This second function works in at least three specific ways. First, it allows reading communities to acknowledge and access the presence and reality of evil that comes from the outside that intrudes upon the everyday and interrupts a community's understanding of the good, without the need to explain it away, rationalize its reality, or look for causes. Second, it provides a model for mourning as it is through Job's affect that he is able to access the Divine, and it is his affective response of anger and despair (his *own evil* if read in light of the Deuteronomistic History and from the perspective of his companions), causing him to confront Adonai, which is counted as truth (for twice in chapter 42 it is God who proclaims Job is the one who spoke what was *right/established* concerning God) in the end of the book. Thus one is able to see the prospective function of one's own "evil." I am speaking of evil here as trespassing societal norms and inhabiting that which one's community disallows. Third, it enables readers today to place their own stories and methods of (hi)story making beside the sacred text, analyzing the ways in which ancient Israel constructed its own history as potential ways in which one may construct her own history today in order to make sense and meaning out of or simply acknowledge the inexplicable reality of past trauma.

---

16 Here I am picking up an idea articulated by Ann Cvetkovich in, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003), 20. Cvetkovich deconstructs the medical notion of trauma in an effort to depathologize trauma and thus allow individuals and communities of trauma to inform national culture rather than be relegated to the clinics, analysts' offices, or prescribed drugs. As she says, "I am compelled by historical understandings of trauma as a way of describing how we live, and especially how we live affectively.... This trauma archive offers new approaches to national History and requires acknowledgment of affective experience as a mode of participation in public life." Trauma archives, "demand models that can explain the links between trauma and everyday experience, the intergenerational transmission from past to present, and the cultural memory of trauma as central to the formation of identities and publics." Cvetkovich, 38–39.

17 Brueggemann describes Job as a form of wisdom literature he calls protest literature. Bruce C. Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terence E. Fretheim and David L. Petersen, *A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999, 2nd ed. 2005), 381–424.

As Folkkleman says, “Biblical poetry is always fiercely emotional, but at the same time it is emotional in such a way that it reaches out for the universal, mostly successfully. Job’s fate and his emotions are not strange to us, and the Book of Job explores the extremes for us. And ‘we’—we are of all times.”<sup>18</sup> The first way in which the book of Job functions for the reading community today is that it acknowledges and accesses the presence and reality of evil that intrudes upon the everyday and interrupts our understanding of the good. Without getting lost in the details of the Job of the prose versus the Job in the poetic core, the fictional narrative is intentionally set up in a way that draws the reader to contemplate why such “bad things happen to good people.”<sup>19</sup> This is not an unfamiliar question in religious communities nor is Job an unfamiliar book in which one would turn to as a way to contemplate or mourn hardships that befall a person or community.

Reading Job as a symbolic history maintains its symbolic and allegorical nature. This frees the story from being concretized as an actual story about a factual character. Symbols arise within human consciousness by way of the unconscious, providing a bridge between self and other, or ego and one’s larger Self, or one’s consciousness and one’s lost parts of history eliminated and repressed due to the affective weight of their trauma, between one’s self and what is beyond. Understood as a symbol, the story of Job provides readers today a bridge in which to engage an evil that has come upon them or their community, something that has disrupted one’s own *going on being*.<sup>20</sup> To acknowledge such evil, without explaining it away by taking on the blame for the events or shunting the blame upon someone else, enables one to access the outrage, despair and anger associated, but perhaps previously unintegrated, the chance to become integrated. This integration is possible due to the gap created between what was previously constructed as the *truth* of one’s life or experience and the disruption of that truth. By contemplating the gap opened in the book of Job a reader today, reflecting upon her own story in conjunction with Job’s, is able to trepidatiously traverse the gap for herself because of a felt companionship with the character and story in the text.

---

18 Jan Fokkelman, *The Book of Job in Form: A Literary Translation with Commentary* (Leiden and London: Brill, 2012), 21.

19 Westermann asserts this existential question undergirds the book of Job and that focusing on the “problem” of evil (though it cannot be disputed that the dialogue throughout Job indeed wrestles with this problem) rather than the existential question shifts the focus of the book from lament to disputation. He argues we must start with the question and the presence of lament that undergirds the book. Claus Westermann, *The Structure of the Book of Job: A Form-Critical Analysis*, trans. by Charles A. Muenchow (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 1-13.

20 Winnicott, *The Maturation Process and the Facilitating Environment*, (London: Karnac, 1965/1990), 47-54. Winnicott describes how, if one’s *being*, meaning the act of simply being as opposed to doing, is nurtured early on through the “good-enough” environment, then one is able to experience being, enjoying one’s creative potential and urges that emerge uninhibited, throughout one’s life. Without this early experience one learns to operate out of a false sense of being masked by doing and producing without the undergirding of being first.

Not only does the book of Job allow one to contemplate the consequences of evil that intrude from the outside, without justifying it, but it also allows one to access her own “evil,” that is her shadow, that which remains unintegrated. Integrating these left-out parts of one’s personality and being, as is read in the story of Job, allow one to see and thus know God face-to-face. The character of Job acted uncharacteristically for Covenant Religion. Job’s friends questioned him time and again about his own wordiness (8:1, 11:2-6, 15:2-3, 18:2). They questioned his assumption of blamelessness (4:7, 17; 11:4; 15:14), his anger and outrage at the injustice felt (15:3-6; 18:3) and his despair, chiding that God would not pervert justice nor would any human being be without wickedness (22:1-3; 25:4). It can be said that Job holds the evil for his community. Traditional wisdom asserted that no mortal was truly just before God and therefore Job’s claim of innocence was his folly. Due to the narrator’s creativity and willingness, Job transgresses the Covenant and yet maintains his integrity, asserting his innocence and speaking out against God’s felt neglect. This move provided space for ancient Israel to acknowledge the pain of exile by allowing it to be inscribed in their sacred canon. However, Job’s willingness to transgress the Covenant has yet another function for the reading community today. Job’s ability to claim his anger and aggression and use it in relation to his community and his God is an encounter with the national history’s and therefore Covenant Religion’s inferior function, and relates to that which is felt to be “bad” or perhaps even “evil” in faith communities today. The book of Job thus not only witnesses to external evil and its ramifications upon the story of Israel’s history told in the Hebrew canon, but it witnesses to individual and communally constructed evil in our world today and the need for it to be integrated, linked back into the unity of being.

Evil in this way does not have one definition but rather depends upon the human individual and each individual’s societal context. For Job, it was his anger and aggression, his willingness to testify to God’s silence and perceived wrongdoing that was felt to be evil. This is not to somehow morally categorize certain actions or circumstances as evil but to analyze how our own constructions of good create, in a sense, certain other constructions of evil that we then inhibit ourselves and others from inhabiting. Job’s friends considered Job’s actions morally outrageous, and were thus able to project their own feelings of anger and aggression upon their friend ridding themselves of their own anger at the injustice experienced in their midst.

### CONFRONTATION AND CREATIVITY IN THE THIRD SPACE

Here something new begins to emerge through the evil or that which is kept in the shadows. This process is what Jung calls the transcendent function, an ongoing process of getting to know the unconscious counter-position through the confrontation of the rational and irrational or between what one knows and what one is surprised and confronted by in one’s own self, the perspective that is

underdeveloped.<sup>21</sup> The new that emerges in the book of Job is the new image of God, and thus a new relationship that comes by way of the shadow. As Ulanov expounds, “The transcendent function is a natural psychic process of going back and forth between opposites to create a third out of the two.”<sup>22</sup> In the work being described here, the transcendent function can be understood on two different levels. First, one can understand the dialectical relationship between the book of Job and the Deuteronomistic History or what I have elsewhere referred to as Individuated Religion and Covenant Religion.<sup>23</sup> Understood in this way, neither history (the national history of the Deuteronomic Covenant or the symbolic history of Job) trumps the other. Instead, the two remain side by side together in the canon. It is the going back and forth between the two. On the one hand, the story is that of the Deuteronomistic History or Covenant Religion that structures a firm way of living, relying, in part, on internalized shame (because you disobeyed the covenant God is sending you into exile) in order to maintain hope of renewal based on that structure (if you repent, God will restore you to your land). On the other hand is the story of Job that dismantles this former structure showing its holes and disrupting its foundation. While the book of Job proffers what I consider an Individuated Religion or a personal way to understand the God of the covenant in contrast to Covenant Religion or the religion postulated in the Deuteronomistic History, it is not Individuated Religion *per se* that is the new symbol that arises, but the *God* experienced through Job’s own shadow, and thus Israel’s shadow, the shadow of anger and aggression.

The new that arises in the dialectical interchange between the Deuteronomistic History and the book of Job is a new image of God experienced through the servant Job who is *tam*, complete and blameless. God’s blameless servant unlike any in all the land is finished or decimated (yet again, *tam*) though still maintains his integrity (*tammim*), not through ritualistic abidance of the law (as the Covenant mandates in Deuteronomy) but through his anger and aggression, which allowed him to access the Divine and see God with his own eyes, establishing (*nkownah*) something true. That which was established was not a codified belief system that provided assurance for safety, prosperity, or well being based on a particular set of actions or rituals, but rather an experience of God that was beyond that which was imaged in the Covenant. This alternative image of God showed a God that could contain the good and the bad, the disappointment, anger, and aggression, the experience of utter loss and devastation, and not flee from it or provide excuses for such horrible experiences.

In the narrator’s choice to include a response from God, a face-to-face exchange, a significant shift is made from the previously established Covenant. An individual servant of Adonai dares to address Adonai face-to-face and pleads

21 Jung, CW Vol. 14, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), par 257.

22 Ulanov, *Unshuttered Heart*, 163.

23 Tiffany Houck-Loomis, *On Making History: Explorations into the Symbolic Function of the Deuteronomic Covenant and a Symbolic History of Israel in the Book of Job*, (NY, New York: Columbia Libraries, 2014).

his innocence. The response given is not decimation as is imagined within the Covenant<sup>24</sup> but a divine encounter. In the encounter Adonai paints a picture of creation that includes the weakest and most vulnerable creatures and the largest, strongest, and most wild creatures side-by-side with the celestial and environmental processes. God speaks to the needs of all of these animals and the awareness of all that goes on within the earthly and heavenly realm. Giving voice to such processes expands the image of God. While Adonai is Israel's God, Adonai is imaged in Job as the creator and sustainer of all the animate and inanimate processes in the universe. This enlarged view of God does not shame Job or put Job "in his place," as others have suggested<sup>25</sup> but rather serves to situate Job, as Israel, as the everyman (the *geber*) between the reality and the ideal, between the tension of living in what can feel like the painful reality of now, giving voice to inexplicable evil while assuring that such evil is not deserved and does not go unnoticed but does not necessarily have a resolution either.

Jung finds the third, or the transcendent function, in the spontaneous and creative solution that comes through consciously bearing the tension of the opposites, in the gap-living space. As he says, "The solution, seemingly of its own accord, appears out of nature. Then and then only is it convincing. It is felt as 'grace.' Since the solution proceeds out of the confrontation and clash of opposites, it is usually an unfathomable mixture of conscious and unconscious factors, and therefore a symbol, a coin split into two halves which fit together precisely."<sup>26</sup> Winnicott finds the third in the space between subject and object, between internal and external realities, in the space where objects are found and, in health, eventually used to adapt to external reality. In a creative solution, the author(s) of Job picture(s) a man who is blameless and upright yet holds the symbolic value of being utterly destroyed regardless of this blamelessness and the way in which he maintains his integrity is through a suspension of his Covenantal rituals. Though he still maintains a relationship with the Covenant, as is imaged in the language utilized throughout the book, it is his surrender to his own felt evil, his anger and aggression toward his unjust circumstances, an attitude his community believed to be dangerously wrong, that allows for a confrontation with God and thus a new

---

24 One of the consequences for Israel's disobedience in the Deuteronomic Covenant is that God will hide God's face from them (Deut 31:17-18, 32:20). Deut 34:10 suggests that there has not been another prophet since Moses who has known God face-to-face. Another interesting image to explore in the future would be this face-to-face encounter as Moses is described having with God in Deuteronomy and the development (or lack of development) of this image regarding the "servants" of Adonai throughout the historical books and the prophets up to the encounter through in the "whirlwind" as described in the book of Job. Though Job seems to be enduring the consequences of Covenantal disobedience, nonetheless, God does not hide God's face from Job but shows up and speaks to and with Job.

25 Tremper Longman III, *Job*, In *Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2012).

26 Jung, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*, ed. Aniela Jaffé, trans. Richard and Clara Winston, (New York: Pantheon, 1963), 335, quoted in Ulanov, *Unshuttered Heart*, 164.

god-image, an image of the expansiveness of the divine, the divine who holds in mind all of creation. Through the book of Job the Covenant becomes an object able to be *used* rather than simply related to, used to relate to objective others in the Winnicottian sense as it survived Job's subjective destruction.

The second way in which the transcendent function is at work is through the dialectical interchange between the two and three within the text and the two and the three within the reader or reading community today. By two and three within the text I mean the *two* histories being told through the Deuteronomistic History and the symbolic history in Job and the *third* that arises, the *tam* servant who has a face-to-face encounter with the Divine creator. The ambivalent symbol of representing wholeness and blamelessness on the one hand and decimation or completion on the other hand, portrayed in the character of Job gives rise to this new god-image—an image of expansiveness. Similarly, by the two for the reader or the reading community, I am referring to the different histories that get constructed as a way of trying to make meaning out of life's difficult circumstances. Often it is the case that we have our own version of a "national narrative." This is the history we tell ourselves, and others, about how we have come to be where we are now. Sometimes these (hi)stories are delicately constructed to mask, or silence, painful parts of one's past or as a way to justify or explain how or why things happened the way in which they did. Other times these (hi)stories are adopted from cultural or communal narratives that are traditionally used as ways to explain the unexplainable or to keep a society or community functioning predictably. These histories are likened to the national narrative read within the Deuteronomistic History or the covenant ideology constructed in the books of Deuteronomy through 2 Kings.

As a professor one of the exercises I do when working with graduate students training for ministry, is life-writing/history-telling. This is a three-step exercise. First, I have students give a reasonably complete account of their life thus far. Without drawing attention to anything specific I ask them to write a brief account of their life history (in five pages or less); where they have come from, what their growing up was like and how they got to where they are now, their family structure, etc. I think of this assignment as gathering their "national narrative" or formalized history, likened to the Deuteronomistic History repeated throughout the historical books of the canon. After they turn in this assignment, I have them recall the most transformative, or *one* of the most transformative, moments in their life. I have them journal briefly about this during class time and then ask them to write a more formal account of this event to turn in. I ask that this account include as much detail as possible, the sensory and affective surround and a timeline of events. The paper is turned in, in narrative form. The purpose of this second exercise is to ask the previous question in a different way to see what response it evokes. For many, the transformative moment did not make it into their "history," or it was glossed over by the more dominant aspects of their "history." The work of articulating this moment serves to reconnect the affect of the experience. The third and final assignment is another "history" of their life, this time including the details of the transformative moment, as best as can be remembered and the before and after of said event. There is flexibility with the final assignment in terms of

its form. Students are allowed to be as creative as they wish and can choose to perform a musical piece, creative writing, poetry, visual art or any other medium through which they wish to tell their history. This practical exercise is meant to parallel the two histories I posit can be read within the canon in order to show the nuances of the two more clearly and personally. The final assignment is essentially a rearticulation of the first assignment but the two “histories” can be looked at and analyzed for what was missing in the first, and how the second gives a new picture of one’s own image of Self, one’s view of others within her life, and her image of God. The final assignment is meant to parallel the way I imagine Job was written, as a symbolic history that included the felt experience of the Exile, which made way for a god-image alternative to the Covenantal image of God.

Spreading this writing exercise out over the course of the semester, while pairing it with readings from Deuteronomy and Job, trauma literature, and discussions on the symbolic value of history making, my hope is slowly to bring consciousness to ways in which we *make* history as a means of coping with or covering over painful moments of our past. Here is the *two* within the modern day reader or reading community, the official “history” and the unofficial subjective history, the stories or the affective experiences to these stories, that often get left in the shadows. The third that comes in arises between the reader’s two histories (the “national history” as the first history told in the beginning of class and the second historical recording told after time was spent contemplating and articulating a radically transformative, sometimes traumatic in nature, experience) which is possible by placing the biblical stories next to the reader’s stories, forming yet another *two*. The third that comes is unique to each reader, is oftentimes radically different than either of the previous two which stood in isolation and it comes through the shadow of that which has been left out of one’s own national history as originally told.

As Jung writes and Ulanov expounds, the third is only experienced through the shadow of the fourth. Ulanov believes that, “Our work personally and collectively.... Is sorting out the fourth that engineers the third wherein healing locates. For all the stuff, the *materia prima* that does not get included in conscious living, bundles into the fourth. Just as we cannot find the healing third except in the shadow of the fourth, we cannot get to the fourth without going through the shadow of undifferentiated life stuff lying in the unconscious.”<sup>27</sup> As stated before, we find in the fourth, all that we consider bad or evil, that which seeks to dismantle our ideas of the good.<sup>28</sup> We find the inferior function, or the regressive personality, but it is precisely this part of the personality that ushers in the process of individuation and an experience with that which is beyond our religious and moral structures.<sup>29</sup> The book of Job holds the fourth for the Hebrew canon as it contains that which was left out of the Deuteronomic Covenant, namely, anger, aggression,

27 Ulanov, *Unshuttered Heart*, 169.

28 Jung, CWVol. 12, 123, 297; Ulanov, 170.

29 Jung, CWVol. 12, 192; Ulanov, *The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and in Christian Theology*, 144; Ulanov, *Unshuttered Heart*, 170.



passion, and a *refusal to accept blame* for the atrocities that had come upon him and thus makes way for an experience with the third, the transcendent.

When placing one's own story in relationship to the story(*ies*) within the biblical canon we are brought into relationship with our own shadow. Jung states, "The clash, which is at first of a purely personal nature, is soon followed by the insight that the subjective conflict is only a single instance of the universal clash of opposites."<sup>30</sup> That is, the gift of the sacred texts of the Hebrew canon and in particular the inclusion of both the Deuteronomic and Joban portrayal of God is that they are revealed to contain the opposites without eradicating either one, i.e. the god of the national (Deuteronomic) history and the god of the book of Job, even the experience of good and evil, internal and external, are allowed to exist side by side without cause. In maintaining the tension of these opposites, the canon itself elicits the third. Ulanov reminds that, "the third reveals the larger fourth, emerges from the fourth, is sponsored by the fourth."<sup>31</sup> By the canon containing such stories as Job, which includes affect and actions traditionally seen as bad or wrong (anger, depression, protest, rage), it (the text) holds the fourth for the reader and reading community until it is able to be integrated.

Ulanov believes this is our work now, collectively and personally. We find the fourth in that which we consider destructive, evil, any fundamentalistic or dogmatic approach that falls into a kind of split way of thinking and being. In splitting, one maintains the idea of the good for one's self, thinking she can get rid of the bad which is then thrown onto another individual or entire community where it can be killed off in order to secure one's identification with the good. This kind of splitting happens throughout the Hebrew canon as various communities (Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites), Israel's own community (particularly the Kings of the North and the southern King, Manasseh), and, at times, God (parts of Lamentations and Job) are scapegoated with the bad. The national narrative in the historical books of the canon maintains a story that encourages Israel to rid the community of the bad and thus inherit the land and all the blessings promised in the Covenant, Israel's symbol of the good.

The fourth is the grist of our complexes. It is the undifferentiated material that lies in the unconscious and thrusts itself into daily living unexpectedly.<sup>32</sup> The fourth is that which does not align with our individual and communal ideals of the good and thus is repressed and thrust onto others leading us to relate to others through projective identification, projecting aspects of our self upon others and then identifying with these projections of ours in others as if they really belong to them, when it actually belongs to us. Unconsciously, we then see and relate to others for the bit of evil that they hold for us, and thus we hate and demonize them and try to control them or to rid them of this bad that we have not held within

---

30 Jung, *CW* Vol. 13, 335, quoted in Ulanov, *Unshuttered Heart*, 167.

31 Ulanov, *Unshuttered Heart*, 167.

32 Jung, "Autonomy of the Unconscious," in *CW* Vol. II.



our own selves. Lying in the shadows, it is not allowed light to grow and become integrated, thus it remains regressed and stunted.

However, there is another function of the fourth—the constructive and protective function. Ulanov reminds us of the “necessity of growth beginning in the dark.”<sup>33</sup> She speaks of the role of the analyst at moments when the analyst holds something of the patient in the shadows, rather than impinging upon the analysand’s process by offering interpretations too soon. In this way, the grist of the analysand is protected and held until she is ready and able for integration.<sup>34</sup> Developing a relationship with this grist brings freedom from the grip of complexes that enslave us into certain ideas of the good and perpetuate scapegoating of the bad.<sup>35</sup> This is the gift of our sacred texts. They contain the opposites, do not provide easy answers or simplified solutions, muck up our tightly held notions of right and wrong or good and bad and they show us alternative ways to engage. Through the grist, one learns to engage through his inferior function, his non-dominant hand. In this way, he is brought back into relationship with parts of his self, his experience of his past and his experience of the present, which while remaining un-integrated gathered energy bound to the unconscious complex.

Reading Job as a symbolic history enables readers to contemplate their own ways of constructing histories out of which they construct identity and ways of being in relationship with others. This is a dialectical process whereby engaging with the book of Job in this symbolic way one may be able to get linked back to one’s own experience of trauma or experiences of loss and pain that were thrown out of consciousness due to the severity of pain they caused or the disruption to one’s conscious way of living. The link is provided symbolically, opening up more space to engage allowing for the ability to cathect, or be connected once again due to the availability of affective energy with which to utilize. By contemplating the evil Job experienced and Job’s own ability to hold the evil, what was felt to be evil by the dominant narrative, namely denying responsibility and crying out in anger and disappointment, the book of Job is the hinge into evil that allows readers today a portal into evil’s reality and its ineffability. It keeps evil present, disallowing reading communities from denying its presence and impact upon the everyday. It also reminds us we are not void of the evil ourselves and in fact shows the prospective and useful function of evil for depth, growth, and wholeness. Not only does reading Job in this way allow us to contemplate our own evil and the reality of evil in the world, but also it is through one’s engagement with the contents of the fourth that the new arises, and the new that arises in Job is an image of a face-to-face encounter with one’s Divine creator. This kind of encounter, excluded from Deuteronomistic History’s portrayal of Covenant due to Israel’s disobedience (Deut 31:17-18, 32:20), established a new way of imaging God and a new way of imaging one’s own Self (and community) in relation to the Divine. As stated above, this new god-image is one that can hold the reality of evil without placing the blame

33 Ulanov, *Unshuttered Heart*, 175.

34 Ibid., 175.

35 Ulanov, *Spirit in Jung* (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Daimon Verlag, 2005), 57-60.

upon anyone else or taking the blame personally, it is an image that maintains ambivalence and the vastness of human experience, acting on account of all of creation *hinnäm*, without cause.

### **JOB MINDING THE GAP: ALLOWING THE COVENANT TO MOVE FROM SUBJECTIVE OBJECT TO OBJECTIVE OBJECT**

Finally, reading the book of Job as a symbolic history, as a counter-narrative to the Deuteronomistic History's portrayal of Covenant Religion that arises through, what I have termed Job's Individuated Religion, makes space for destruction and thus an experience with reality, outside of one's subjectivity. It is precisely the Covenant's ability to withstand Job's destruction of it that places it outside of Job (Israel's) subjectivity and thus allows it to become a resource for living.<sup>36</sup> Through Individuated Religion, proffered in the book of Job, Job deconstructs the Deuteronomic Covenant and the tenets of Covenant Religion founded upon the paraenesis of the blessings and curses that were originally adopted from Ancient Near Eastern vassal treaties and loyalty oaths used as a way of constructing identity and making meaning through the turmoil of national development and its later collapse. It was precisely that which was viewed as evil, namely aggression and destruction, that allowed the Covenant, and as a result, God, to survive, to be placed outside of Israel's subjective experience and be used once again as a resource for living. This new that arises through Job's story is a vision of God that is beyond Israel's, and therefore beyond our own, subjective experience of this God—a God that acts *hinnäm*, without cause, on behalf of all of creation.

In the epilogue, Job continues to make sacrifices on behalf of piety. However, his sacrifices at the end are on behalf of his friends' piety rather than on his own. Because of his willingness to wrestle with the Covenant, Job was brought into relationship with his own unconscious material, the complex of *tam* or perfectionism/blamelessness before it included aggression and anger. By going through the shadow of the fourth, the book of Job makes room for the third, the new thing that is the transcendent and not bound by the Covenant, the Divine creator who acts without cause. In the book of Job, Adonai is not *the* Covenant but is placed, once again, outside of the Covenant. Through Job's aggression, desire, and refusal to accept blame, Job established a new way of relating to Adonai without abandoning the former symbol of the Covenant but by creating *space between* Adonai and the Covenant thus reminding postexilic Israel of the vastness and ineffability of Adonai.

In this way, the book of Job, read as a symbolic history, serves as a resource for faith communities today in both content and process. The book itself contains our own foreclosed parts of history. In the author's willingness to situate Job hovering in the abyss opened up by the traumatic events in the prologue, the

---

36 Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 120–127.

author opens the hinge door of evil<sup>37</sup> through which postexilic Israel, and readers and reading communities since then, are brought back into relationship with that which is cut off and thrust onto others and put outside of consciousness. The book of Job, and its relation to the Hebrew canon, read as a counter-text, challenges faith communities today to evaluate ways in which their ruling principle (dogma, liturgies, theologies, dominant scriptural interpretations, etc.) dominates congregational life, linguistically blocking<sup>38</sup> peoples' expressions that do not align. The questions that arise out of this study for people training for pastoral ministry or working as a clinicians are: How do we make room for alternative (hi)stories? What are ways in which faith communities can be containers for the good *and* the bad, maintaining a relationship with what is felt to be evil, both external and internal, so as not to thrust it upon other individuals, groups or entire nations? How do our liturgies and dominant theologies disallow other voices or experiences of God? Finally, how can faith communities or individuals in psychotherapy utilize their sacred texts, and the histories behind them, in order to creatively re-imagine the Reality that is beyond the symbols within one's particular faith tradition?

The new image of God that emerges in the book of Job is not bound by creed, nationality, or personal experience but rather images God as one who acts without cause, meaning, one whose actions are not dependent upon one's beliefs, rituals, obedience, or disobedience. This image of God is not a God who turns God's face away due to rebelliousness or disobedience but remains present amidst horrific evils, sees them and the suffering, and still maintains a perspective that is larger than the evil experienced. This new image is not the dominant image within the Hebrew canon yet its presence in the book of Job works to free the Covenant from the confines of its conditionality. Rather than God being swayed to act according to one's particular actions, God is seen to act on behalf of all of creation.

---

37 The idea of the hinge of evil comes from Ann Ulanov. In *The Unshuttered Heart* she articulates, "Greater consciousness... takes us down deeper into the mystery of evil. Really knowing our own shadow drops us as if through a trapdoor into collective evil, and through that to evil *per se*, its mystery in itself," 141.

38 A phrase borrowed from Robert C. Dykstra, "Repressing the Kingdom: Pastoral Theology as Aesthetic Imagination," in *Pastoral Psychology* 61 (2012), 391-409.